of investment except for the sub-sectors of Entertainment Electronics and Strategic Electronics.

(iii) Permitting direct foreign equity upto 51% with its attendent advantages of technology transfer, marketing expertise, modern managerial techniques and new possibilities for promotion of exports through foreign trading companies.

(iv) Amendment to the Monopolies Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act to remove the threshold limits of assets in respect of MRTP companies.

(v) The system of Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP) will not be applicable to new projects, although existing projects with such programmes will continue to be governed by them.

(vi) Access to foreign exchange through the medium of exports by the REP Mechanism (Exim Scrips).

(vii) Extending the concessions under Section 80 HHC of the Income Tax Act to exporters of Software by inserting a new Section 80 HHE.

(viii) Reduction in excise duties on the goods permitted to be sold in the domestic tariff area under the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) Scheme.

However, as the electronic industry is generally import intensive and as the technology in this sector changes rapidly, if any operational problems are experienced by the industry, appropriate corrective action will be taken to ensure the healthy growth of the industry.

Constitutional status to Planning Commission

*433. SHRI SIMON MARANDI: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government are considering to provide constitutional status to the Planning Commission; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[English]

Fruit Processing Unit in Dindigul

*434. SHRI C. SRINIVASAN: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Govenment have considered the representations for establishment of a fruit processing unit in Dindigul in Tamil Nadu where large quantities of fruits like grapes, bananas, etc. are available; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) The Ministry of Food Processing Industries have not received any representa-

tion for setting up of a fruit processing unit in Dindigul.

(b) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Supply of Essential Commodities through Fair Price Shops

*435. SHRI HARIKEWAL PRASAD :
DR. SUDHIR RAY :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to supply all essential commodities through Fair Price Shops;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Fair Price Shops are proposed to be opened in rural areas as in urban areas;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) to (e) Six key essential commodities, viz. wheat, rice, kerosene, levy sugar, imported edible oils and soft coke are supplied by the Central Government to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations, who in turn arrange for their distribution to consumers. The State Governments/Union Territory Administrations are free to add, on their own, additional items of mass consumption, taking into account local preferences.

The strengthening and streamlining of the Public Distribution System (PDS) is a continual process. The Central Government has been advising State Governments/UT Administrations, among other things, to expand PDS outlets in uncovered/undercovered areas and to use mobile vans whenever possible in remote and tribal areas, etc.

[English]

Foreign Investment in Public Sector Undertakings

*436. SHRI V. N. SHARMA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to allow 51 per cent equity participation in Public Sector Undertakings by multinational companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Public Sector Undertakings; where foreign investment is proposed to be allowed, have been identified;

(d) if so, the details in this regard; and

(e) the names of the multinational companies which are proposed to be allowed to invest in these Public Sector Undertakings ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI P. K. THUNGON) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Decline in Production in Public Sector Undertakings

*437. PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the reasons for the continuous losses, decline in production and labour resentment in various Public